



**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

**October 9, 2008**

**For immediate release**

- 1. Water on October Environmental Protection Commission agenda**
- 2. Caution urged for outdoor wood-fired boilers**

## **WATER ON OCTOBER ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSION AGENDA**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Jerah Gallinger at (515) 313-8909**

DES MOINES – The Environmental Protection Commission will discuss amendments regarding Iowa's antidegradation policy, and water use and allocation permit fees at its monthly meeting Oct. 14.

Proposed fee changes would revise the fee schedule for water use permits plus aquifer storage and recovery well permits.

The DNR will also request changes in the state's antidegradation policy which would set minimum requirements for the state to conserve, maintain and protect existing uses and water quality.

The meeting will start at 10 a.m. at the Air Quality Building located at 7900 Hickman Rd. in Urbandale. The meeting is open to the public, with public comments starting at 10:30 a.m.

The complete agenda for the EPC meeting is as follows:

- Agenda topics
- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes
- Director's Remarks

- 2009 EPC Dates and Locations
- Notice of Intended Action-Chapter 101-Solid Waste Comprehensive Planning Requirements
- Notice of Intended Action-Water Use and Allocation Permit Fees-Chapter 50: Scope of Division-Definitions-Forms-Rules of Practice; and Chapter 55: Aquifer Storage and Recovery: Criteria and Conditions for Authorizing Storage, Recovery and Use of Water
- Referrals to the Attorney General-Kyle Dudden
- CDI/Winnebago: Appeal of Proposed Decision
- Notice of Intended Action-Chapter 69-Onsite Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems, NPDES General Permit #4 and Chapter 64-Wastewater Construction and Operation Permits
- Notice of Intended Action-Chapter 61-Water Quality Standards (Antidegradation Policy and Implementation Procedures)
- Notice of Intended Action: Chapters 22 and 23: Air Quality Program Rules-Adoption of federal air quality standards and revisions to air construction permit requirements
- Proposed Rule: Chapters 21, 22, 23, 25 and 34: Air Quality Program Rules-Rescission of vacated federal regulations
  - DNR staff, as well as an air quality attorney, will be available for discussion of air quality program rules
- Regional Collection Center Establishment Grant-Contract Recommendations
- Monthly Reports
- General Discussion
  - PM 2.5 Update
  - Underground Storage Tanks Update
  - Memo Supplemental Funding Requests
- Items for Next Month's Meeting
  - November 10<sup>th</sup>-Urbandale
  - December 9<sup>th</sup>-Urbandale

Look for more information about the agenda items on the DNR Web site under Commissions and Boards at [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov).

Please note, due to the Veteran's Day holiday, November's meeting has been rescheduled from Nov.11 to Nov. 10.

The members of the commission are Henry Marquard, chair, Muscatine; Charlotte Hubbell, vice chair, Des Moines; Suzanne Morrow, secretary, Storm Lake; David Petty, Eldora; Shearon Elderkin, Cedar Rapids; Susan Heathcote, Des Moines; Paul Johnson, Decorah and Marty Stimson, Cedar Rapids. The director of the DNR is Richard Leopold.

*Writer: Elise Taylor*

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## **CAUTION URGED FOR OUTDOOR WOOD-FIRED BOILERS**

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Christine Paulson, Environmental Specialist Senior, (515) 242-5154

URBANDALE — The high cost of petroleum-based fuels for home heating has Iowans looking at alternative sources. In both rural and residential areas, some Iowans have purchased or are considering outdoor wood-fired boilers (OWBs) or furnaces. DNR officials caution against burning any wood other than untreated, well-seasoned wood and advise that OWBs can be more polluting and less efficient than other home heating devices.

“Unlike residential wood burning stoves, OWBs are not required to meet federal emission standards,” says Christine Paulson, an air specialist with the DNR Air Quality Bureau. “We’ve received a number of complaints about the OWBs, and our investigations have revealed that many of the concerns raised are valid. Because of the large fireboxes on the units, some people have jumped to the conclusion that anything can be burned in them.”

OWBs are free-standing wood burning devices that heat water, which is then pumped to one or more structures to provide heat. They look like a small shed with a short smokestack on top. They may be used to heat homes and outbuildings, produce domestic hot water, heat hot tubs or provide heat to agricultural operations. OWBs are also called outdoor wood-fired hydronic heaters (OWHH).

Before buying an OWB, the DNR asks you to consider the possible health and environmental impact to your family, neighbors, pets and livestock, and to contact your county health department or city hall to see if OWBs are allowed.

Then, refrain from burning household garbage and debris in the OWB. Trash and debris may contain chemicals that are illegal to burn in such devices without an air permit. Burning such items releases toxic air pollutants, some of which are carcinogens.

“We had a case last spring where someone was burning railroad ties in his OWB,” adds Paulson. “Railroad ties are treated with creosote, a probable carcinogen. Just handling railroad ties has been shown to cause skin rash and irritation. Imagine what it can be when vaporized and drawn deep into the lungs.”

Even wood smoke from well seasoned hardwood contains fine particle pollution, carbon monoxide, and other pollutants, so it is important to release it through a stack well above roof lines so that children, people with lung and heart disease, and other sensitive groups are not exposed to it.

“We encourage consumers to choose the cleanest, most efficient models available, preferably EPA-certified units. Then operate and maintain the unit, whether it is new or one of the older models, according to manufacturers’ instructions,” emphasizes Paulson.

The DNR also recommends that OWB operators place the unit at least 500 feet from an adjoining property line, keep the doors of the unit closed unless loading or stoking the live fire, and install a vertical, unobstructed stack that is at least 5 feet taller than the roof line of nearby structures and residences. Never use propellants to start a fire and do not store them near an OWB. A child in Iowa recently died from burns linked to a propellant stored near an operating OWB.

A DNR OWB Fact Sheet with more information is available at [www.iowacleanair.com/news/files/OWB\\_Fact\\_Sheet.doc](http://www.iowacleanair.com/news/files/OWB_Fact_Sheet.doc). Information on EPA's OWB program, including information on EPA-certified models, is available at <http://www.epa.gov/woodheaters/>.

Questions or complaints regarding specific OWB or other wood heaters should be directed to appropriate DNR field offices. A map and contact information for the six DNR field offices is available at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/fo/fomap.html> or call (515) 242-5100. Those with questions or concerns within Polk County should call (515) 286-3351; or within Linn County call (319) 892-6000. Permit questions may be directed to the DNR Air Quality Bureau permit hotline at 1-877-247-4692.